

9 March 1956

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director/Intelligence

ATTENTION: Chief, Field Coordination Staff

FROM: Assistant Director for Basic Intelligence

SUBJECT: Area Familiarization Travel to the U.S.S.R.

REFERENCE: Memorandum from DCI, "Foreign Travel Under Area Familiarization and Survey Programs" dated 26 March 1955

1. This Office desires an examination of the possibility of sending a DD/I regional specialist to the U.S.S.R. under the area familiarization program set forth in the reference DCI memorandum. If there is agreement in principle to this area familiarization travel, the Office of Basic Intelligence proposes 1) to budget for an area familiarization trip to the U.S.S.R. in Fiscal Year 1957 and 2) to submit at the appropriate time a travel memorandum for such travel in accordance with established procedures.

2. The Office of Basic Intelligence is responsible for the substantive editing and processing of the National Intelligence Survey and the publishing thereof and is organized into three Divisions, one of which is the Regional Division. The functions of the Regional Division are to review for regional accuracy and adequacy all material submitted by the agencies contributing to the NIS Program and to maintain surveillance over situations and conditions of basic intelligence significance in foreign countries. To accomplish this, the Regional Division includes five regional specialists, each responsible for discharging the divisional functions with respect to a major area of the world.

3. In January 1956, the Western Europe specialist was sent on a two-month visit to Spain, France, Western Germany, Austria, and Italy for area familiarization purposes. It is contemplated that each specialist will, in time, be sent to his region of responsibility.

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We believe these visits are of great value to the regional specialists, and to the Agency, in enabling them to round out their knowledge of their areas by personal contact with individuals and conditions in those areas. In most cases, the specialist will be renewing an acquaintance with the area already established by previous travel. In the instance of the U.S.S.R., however, the regional specialist in OBI has never visited the country, although he has a strong background and knowledge of the country based upon long-term study, research, and professional association with the subject.

4. The following considerations in outline travel memorandum form are presented for their bearing on the travel proposed in paragraph 1. Approval in principle would trigger the preparation of detailed arrangements affecting particulars, such as cover, with the appropriate components of the Agency.

a. Specialist's background -- The individual has served as the OBI regional specialist for the Soviet Union and the SovBloc for the past two years. Academically, he prepared himself at Syracuse University and Columbia University and has completed, with the exception of a dissertation, all work toward a Doctorate of Philosophy in economic geography, specializing in the U.S.S.R. He has a reading knowledge of the language and some facility in the spoken language. His daily work involves the comprehensive review of manuscripts on all topics on the Soviet Union and its satellites. He is the only OBI regional specialist who has not had comprehensive residential experience in one or more major countries in his area of responsibility; such residential experience is highly desirable in his position.

b. Objective -- To observe, within the limitations inherent in travel in the Soviet Union, the sociological, economic, and political conditions and incidentally geographic and transportation conditions in the U.S.S.R.

c. Period of trip -- Approximately 60 days (exclusive of travel time) in the period between April and June 1957.

d. Main points to be visited -- Moscow, Leningrad, and Kharkov; these points to be bases for such travel as would be permitted into the surrounding regions. It is believed that a visit to the Soviet Union would be of great profit to the individual even if circumstances precluded extensive travel outside the metropolitan areas.

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